Production According to "Le Guide A.O.F. (1950)"
[The French West African Guidebook]

Bamako

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Export Products -- Karite, peanuts, 11,700 M.T. [metric tons]; sisal, 300 M.T.; cotton, 20 M.T.; tobacco, 35 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 92,256 M.T.; maize, 11,200 M.T.; rice, 4,917 M.T.; fonio, 200 M.T.; yams, 1,000 M.T.; manioc, 2,600 M.T.; potatoes, 1,506 M.T.; sweet potatoes, 3,810 M.T.; beans and onions, 15,200 M.T.; peas, 8,420 M.T.

[34] Ségou

Exports -- Peanuts, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; kapok, 600 M.T.; karite almonds, 1,000 M.T.; butter, 100 M.T.; gum, 20 M.T.

Production of the Niger Office -- Rice, 10,000 M.T.; cotton, 1,300 M.T.

Food crops -- Millet, 15,400 M.T.; maize, 1,000 M.T.; fonio, 4,200 M.T.; peas, 2,600 M.T.; beans, 1,600 M.T.

Bougouni

Exports -- Karite butter, 100 to 600 M.T.; peanuts, 500 M.T.; millet, 1,000 M.T.; wax.

Food crops -- Millet, 40,000 M.T.; fonio, 10,000 M.T.; rice, 6,000 M.T.; maize, 5,000 M.T.; peanuts, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes. (Charts on following pages.)

II. Animal Husbandry

A. Methods of Stock Raising

439 The Bambara are a sedentary, agricultural people; they have a symbiotic relationship with the Somono and Bozo, who are fishermen and sailors exclusively, and with other semi-nomadic peoples like the Peul who are shepherds.

231 [35] However, the Bambara can assemble flocks by exchanging their grain for animals obtained from Peul, Moor, or Touareg shepherds. It is their way of investing their savings; thus, they never dispose of their animals during their periods of increase, but let them grow old in the herds, and their capital increases effortlessly, watched over by the head of the family.

233 In the Sahel, during the rainy season, the animals live by grazing on the numerous grasses and leguminous plants that grow on the mimosa-studded steppe. During the dry season, they live on the fallen branches and husks of the acacias. Then there is transhumance [231] to the inundated regions which become pastures as the waters recede. In the Nioro region, transhumance is towards the Kaarta, the Baoulé, and the Bakoy.

In the Sudan region the animals entrusted to the Peul make short journeys to change pastures; in the rainy season, to the plateaus which are immense pastures; from November on, they return to the valleys and streams.

In the Guinean area, the village flock is entrusted to a Peul shepherd who leads it off in the morning and brings it back at night. The animals are then tethered to the stakes in their owners' courtyards or are penned in an enclosure where the women go to milk them. After the harvest the flocks graze in the fields, but, from the beginning of February, they no longer stray from the dwellings, because everything is parched. The beasts are then fed millet, peanut stalks, or foliage.

231 Neither cattle nor sheep are in the least supervised in reproduction. Coupling is unrestricted and takes place at random in the pastures and at the whim of the animals throughout the year. Birth occurs no matter where; the herdsmen know nothing of obstetrical practice. The calves are nourished with a lightly salted mash of millet stalks or with the crushed fruit of a fig named aourou which supposedly has milk-producing properties.

[232] The finest male goats often are castrated to fatten or tame them. In Kaarta and Mandé goats are raised in pens constructed on piles one or two meters from the ground, with a flooring of boughs which allows excrement to fall through. In this way, the animals are protected from the humidity and from wild beasts.

C. Statistics

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	Sheep Goats	Bovines	Horses	Asses
Bamako	64,987	49,425	6,227	10,356
Ségou	234,645	161,965	10,454 -5,165	12,159
Bougouni	17,360	29,197	431	1,651

Estimates for the three Bambara centers.

D. Products from Livestock

253 Meat -- The principal slaughtering centers are Bamako and Kayes.

439 Some of the available bovines are exported to Senegal. This is done from the Kayes circle by way of the routes: Néma, Timbesa, Nioro, Kayes; or Néma, Nara, Yelamano, Kayes. Others are sent to Guinea to provide meat for the workers in the gold placers of the Siguiri region. Some go to the Ivory and Gold Coasts, where the animals are sent chiefly from Mopti, with participation from the circles [487] of Ségou, San, and Niafunké. Numerous caravan routes penetrate to the Ivory Coast by way of Odienné, Seguela, Korhogo, Bouaké, and Boho-Dioulasso.

[255] Preserves are made in the factories of Lyndiane.

Leather -- Leather comes either from the slaughter houses or 281 from the bush. It is of mediocre quality because of poor preparation: the skins are dried in the sun, folded in two lengthwise, hair against hair, and tied together with a wire, ten to a bundle. About 600 metric tons pass through Bamako annually.

234 Milk and milk derivatives -- The cows are poor producers; most of the milk is furnished by the Moorish, Peul, and Toronké zebus. Butter production is primitive: the sour milk is put in calabashes, cans, or goat skins and shaken until it turns to butter. At Falaladji near Kayes there is a butter and cheese factory.

236 Wool -- The wool is generally used locally for weaving; only 439 a small percentage is exported to France. A great effort has been

A great effort has been
654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

651 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of
441 French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regulations put into force November 30, 1950 (Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507 [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,-000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

●439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro

439 The great distances to the coasts remain an obstacle to outside commerce, for the country lacks motor power. All coal must be imported, and hydroelectric equipment is scanty.

b. Commercial Regulation

The decree 3771-SE of July 21, 1949, set the terms for importing quota goods from metropolitan France and from countries of the French Union or for importing foreign goods. The regulation of exports is set forth in the decree 2233-SE of April 19, 1950. Any merchant holding an export license may export goods. According 441 to Richard-Molard, the commercial companies financed by French and foreign capital (increasingly American) still retain the old trading mentality which seeks to wring maximum profits out of the colony without reinvesting in the country's equipment. Attempts to 474 protect the native producers resulted in the creation of cooperatives which were given certain advantages; nevertheless, the cooperatives soon ran up against the competition of the European commercial houses and were discouraged.

c. Organization

443 Trading posts and cooperatives -- Enumeration and classification of trading posts is governed by a local decree, effective as of the opening of the trading which is itself governed by a general decree. In principle, the decree fixing the location of trading posts is drawn up after consultation by the administrations of the Bamako and Kayes Chambers of Commerce.

[40] It is formally forbidden to buy products elsewhere than at these trading posts, under pain of prosecution; confiscation of goods and seizure of vehicles may even be invoked in certain cases of repeated offense.

Role of the trading posts -- The role of these trading posts is to gather together the products of a region; the choice generally falls on a large village served by a practicable road or on a railway station from which the goods may be the more easily moved out. From the administrative point of view, the trading posts facilitate keeping a

d. Imports and Exports

439 Aside from food peanuts, which remain one of the principal export products, we may mention among the vegetable [41] exports: cotton, rubber from the forests of the south, and "salabraida" and "galam" gums. Livestock and its by-products are too mediocre to mention and are not shipped out of Africa. Let us note, however, the growing export of hides from Kayes, Mopti, the Sudan, and Guinea. As far as mineral products are concerned, the most important one for export is still provided by the old gold mines of Bouré and Bambouk. The Macenta region produces a small quantity of industrial diamonds which are sold in London. Sudanese iron is too far from the coast to be profitable.

The country imports all manufactured objects, construction materials, tools, coal, mineral oils, steel bars, edible foodstuffs, fabrics ...

B. Internal Commerce

a. Commercial Routes

More important commercial traffic takes place within the Sudan or with surrounding countries by way of Senegal, the Sahel, and the southern colonies.

Imports:

By way of Senegal -- French and English thread; salts from Roumania (formerly) and from southern France; wrought and unwrought metals; construction and transportation materials.

By way of the Sahel -- salt in bars from Sebka d'Idjil; bulk salt from Seye; cattle, sheep and goats, horses, gum.

By way of the south -- Guinea: kolas, glass necklaces, ornamental and toilet articles. Ivory Coast: kola nuts, glass trinkets, ornamental and toilet articles. Gold Coast: kola nuts, loincloths and pieces of English cloth, copper rods, glassware, and necklaces.

Exports:

By way of Senegal -- rubber, gold, ivory, peanuts, gum, wool, karite butter, hides of cattle, sheep and goats ...

By the Sahel -- grains, native cotton and wool cloth, sugar, ornamental articles.

439 By the south -- Guinea: rubber, ivory, gold, livestock, rice, millet. Ivory Coast: Sahel salt, livestock, wax, karite, native cotton and wool cloth and blankets. Gold Coast: livestock, native cloth.

443 In addition, all centers of any importance had a large periodic market which was a sort of regional fair, plus a small daily market which permitted the inhabitants of the locality to obtain provisions as needed.

b. Caravan Commerce

443 484 Over and above these markets, a long-distance caravan trade is carried on by the Haoussa and the Dioula, who transport their merchandise in the north with beasts of burdens, in the south by human bearers. These movements continue a commercial tradition and have been altered only by legislation. Before the conquest, any man who wished could enter this commerce on the condition of paying his "Fama" the usual sum. The traders, to protect themselves against brigands, traveled [42] in caravans. Practice had it that the [787] traders consulted a priest before leaving to find out if their undertaking would succeed. After the usual sacrifices, the priest revealed the name of the one who would direct the group. The caravan chief could even be a captive, but everyone owed him obedience because a divine force inhabited him. To each state which is crossed, the [651] caravan paid a customs fee on entering and asked the Fama for permission to cross, indicating the extent of their route and making propitiatory sacrifices in each region. Sometimes certain districts, such as the region of Bougouni, forbade blood sacrifices for fear of bringing down evil forces on themselves. The caravans then let loose an animal secretly at night.

c. Commercial Practices

438 643 Everything could be sold except gold, which was the property of the Fama. No one was supposed to possess gold. If the gold miners of Bouré could sell the gold extracted from the mines, when the buyers entered the Bambara country, they had to present it to the Fama. If he did not wish to buy it, he authorized certain rich people permanently settled in the district (that is, who would be unlikely to leave) to buy

b. Organization of Work

241 621 Work on the land is the only kind of work suitable for free men, for to work the land is to purify it. All agricultural operations [622 are set in motion by the dugu-tigi and are regulated by the fa who 515 assigns tasks by age classes. Each member of the community must work for it every day, except Monday and Thursday, from dawn to about 4:30 p.m. He may be helped, or even replaced, by his children and his captives. The rest of the time he may work for himself in his personal field or in the little fields situated along the water courses and the rivers, which are not periodically redistributed and are considered almost as personal and hereditary property. The fruit of this labor constitutes the personal savings of the community member.

316 423 The exploitation of the subsoil is governed by other rules which we still know only imperfectly. Like the soil, the subsoil belongs to the master of the land. Iron ore was extracted solely by the [324 blacksmith who paid the master of the land a rent in the form of hoes or axes. To exploit the gold mines, thousands of natives went in family groups to the placers at the beginning of the dry season. [63] The location of the placers was determined by the priests and changed every year. The men dig multiple small holes very close to each other, which may go very deep depending on the depth of the barren layer. When the calabashes of gold-bearing earth are brought up, the women wash the earth. The placers are abandoned at the beginning of the rains after three or four months of exploitation. Before the French occupation, gold was the exclusive property of the Fama and could in no case be the object of commerce. To- [439] day, gold is generally sold at the placers to Syrian, native, or European merchants, who have established veritable shops at the mining centers, shops which contain everything necessary for the miner's life.

463 554 The exercise of a profession other than the cultivation of the land is reserved to artisans who are accorded the insulting name of nyaman-kala, for only work on the land is noble work. These artisans form separate families in every Sudanese society, which has caused Europeans to call them, improperly, people of caste. They are divided into independent guilds.